



Issue 5

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Young at Heart ... and in Years

By Sharon Palmer

VA Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System

You may be surprised to learn that twenty "youngsters" are competing in the 2001 Golden Age Games—that is, veterans who are a mere 55 years old and, therefore, eligible to participate for the first time this year. And like most youngsters experiencing something new for the very first time, they're having great fun and eagerly sharing their impressions.

Gayle Evans, of Tomah, Wis., didn't know what to expect at the Games, but so far, he said he's had a ball. Aside from the Texas heat, which he said "is sometimes getting the best of us down here," Evans said he has been thrilled and inspired that even older, disabled veterans can compete and stay active. "I see the Games as a big boost to their egos. It makes them feel good about themselves, and that's what it's all about." Evans said he's already learned a lot about how to prepare for next year's Games.

Charlie Lucas, of Washington, D.C., said that while he is also learning lots that will help him prepare for next year's Games, he has been most impressed with the camaraderie and spirit of the veterans he's met. "I see guys enjoying the journey of life and not worrying about the destination," Lucas said. "It's great for personal and social development." For him, keeping physically fit is a priority. "I try to set goals and do a different physical activity every day."

A couple of these 55-year-old "youngsters" are from California, which will be the host state for the 2002 Golden Age Games. A two-year participant in VA's National Veterans Creative Arts Festival, **Frederick Kole**, of Northridge, Calif.,

had been looking forward to his 55th birthday and being eligible to participate in this year's Golden Age Games. "I know lots of guys who've been, and I've enjoyed hearing every year about the fun they've had at the Games," he said.

Kole appreciates the warm, friendly atmosphere of the Games. "From my point of view, the Games allow vets to be involved with and close to people they don't even know. It's especially great to see older veterans keeping their lives full," he explained. Kole plans to be at the 2002 Golden Age Games, but he is considering being a volunteer instead of a competitor next time.

Jack Jackson, another 55-year-old newcomer to the Golden Age Games, fully expected to compete in ambulatory events. But, at the last minute, his doctor told him he must compete from his wheelchair because of health problems and aggravated injuries. Although somewhat disappointed with the change in plans, Jackson is sincerely grateful for the caring spirit of the medical staff and volunteers at the Games. "They're all top-notch," Jackson said. "They watch out for you, and don't let you make a mistake."

Jackson, who is here with the VA Palo Alto Health Care System team, is excited about the 2002 Golden Age Games coming to Los Angeles. "Everybody will get to see beautiful Southern California. A big city like L.A. is such a drawing card! They'll have lots to see in their free time, like Sea World and Disneyland, and lots of cultures to experience." Jackson said the Games are particularly special because "you have a whole week to be with people you've met—and then there's anticipation of seeing them at next year's Games." We hope to see all you "youngsters" (and not-so youngsters) at the 2002 Golden Age Games!

Do You Know the Story of Flag Day?

Today is Flag Day, our nation's annual birthday celebration for the Stars and



Stripes. How much do you know about the history of this observance?

The Stars and Stripes came into being on June 14, 1777, when the Continental Congress authorized a new flag to symbolize the new nation, the United States of America.

The Stars and Stripes first flew in a Flag Day celebration in Hartford, Conn., in 1861, during the first summer of the Civil War. The first national

observance of Flag Day took place on June 14, 1877, the centennial of the original flag resolution.

By the mid-1890s, the observance of Flag Day on June 14 was a popular event. Mayors and governors began to issue proclamations in their jurisdictions to celebrate this occasion.

In the years to follow, public sentiment for a national Flag Day observance greatly intensified. Numerous patriotic societies and veterans groups became identified with the Flag Day movement. Since their main objective was to stimulate patriotism among the nation's

young people, schools were the first to become involved in flag activities.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation calling for a nationwide observance of Flag Day on June 14, but it wasn't until 1949 that Congress made this day a permanent observance by resolving "that the 14th day of June each year is hereby designated as Flag Day..." The measure was signed into law by President Harry S Truman.

Although Flag Day is not celebrated as a federal holiday, Americans everywhere continue to honor the history and heritage it represents.

Many of you have asked for your scores in pentathlon. While it is difficult and time-consuming to get that information for all of you, we thought you might like to see the top scores/distances in each division and age group. These are the scores/distances to beat in 2002!

Division	Age Group	Shot Put	Air Rifle (Lowest score)	Softball Hit	Discus	Basketball
Male/Amb	55-59	30'	5	284"	95'3"	8
Male/Amb	60-64	29'1 1/4"	6	291'11"	89'7"	4
Male/Amb	65-69	32'3 3/4"	6	298'1"	96'	7
Male/Amb	70-74	32'4"	5	230'7"	75'11"	7
Male/Amb	75-79	26'5"	6	233'5"	74'10 3/4"	8
Male/Amb	80+	19'1"	5	175'7"	46'5"	4
Male/WC	55-59	14'3 3/4"	5	187'7"	40'3 1/2"	7
Male/WC	60-64	14'8"	11	150'10"	37'2"	6
Male/WC	65-69	17'4"	6	187'	50'2 1/2"	8
Male/WC	70-74	9'4 3/4"	8	94'7"	24'2 1/2"	1
Male/WC	75-79	11'10"	5	140"	40'1"	1
Male/WC	80+	6'10 3/4"	8	99'9"	29'1 1/2"	1
Female/Amb	55-59	14'6"	9	101'5"	31'1"	4
Female/Amb	60-64	22'6 1/2"	14	114'11"	41'3 1/4"	0
Female/Amb	65-69	17'6 1/4"	9	80'3"	31'8"	3
Female/Amb	70-74	13'6 1/4"	14	101'5"	27'2 1/4"	0
Female/Amb	75-79	19'	9	105'10"	25'2"	2
Female/Amb	80+	15'10 3/4"	104	86'4"	30'1"	4
Female/WC	60-64	9'9 3/4"	125	94'3"	21'9"	0
Female/WC	75-79	6'11"	41	44'3"	9 1/2"	0

• Today's Schedule •

8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Croquet (60-64; 70-74; 65-69; 80+)	<i>DHS* Soccer Field #14</i>
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Croquet (55-59; 75-79)	<i>DHS Soccer Field #14</i>
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Table Tennis (55-59; 75-79; 60-64; 70-74)	<i>High Hat Gym</i>
1:00 – 3:00 p.m.	Table Tennis (65-69; 80+)	<i>High Hat Gym</i>
6:00 – 9:00 p.m.	City of Champions Barbecue and Dance	<i>Armstrong Park, Duncanville</i>

**Duncanville High School*

Medal presentation ceremony daily at 4:30 p.m. in DHS Auditorium #11

Announcements

Tonight's Barbecue Don't forget to bring your lawn chair with you to tonight's City of Champions Barbecue and Dance.

AA/NA meetings are being held daily from 12:00-1:00 p.m. in Room 1020, Building #10.

How did you do? Results from the events are now being posted in the cafeteria. This is the only place where results will be posted.

Where's the Major? Many of you have noticed that Major James Meadows, a big supporter of the Games for the past few years, is not here cheering you on from the sidelines this year. Although he is unable to be here, he'd like to hear from you. You can send him an e-mail message at jmeadows@webster.edu.

Check your e-mail Laptop computers with Internet access are available in Room 908 of Building #9. The room is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for athletes and staff to check messages and communicate with family and friends back home.

Golden Age Games on the Web:

www.va.gov/vetevent/gag/2001

Who's Here?

Total Participants: 487

Wheelchair Participants: 91

Women: 30

World War II Veterans: 105

Korean War Veterans: 104

Vietnam Veterans: 63

Oldest Participant: 90

Average Age: 69

States Represented: 28

CA: 127

WV: 8

TX: 89

CO, CN, LA: 7

NY: 53

MA, OK: 6

IL: 28

AL, DC: 5

FL: 20

IA: 4

MO: 19

ME, NV, PA: 2

KS: 16

AZ, MS, NC: 1

MD: 13

MI: 12

OH: 11

VA, WI: 9

Golden Quotables...

"I think it's great that all the Golden Age veterans can get together to have some fun and games once a year. The veterans are fortunate to have a caring staff of people to assist in the planning and execution of these great Games. It's 'fun on the run' for a week that flies by too quickly. I like to see the country, the people, the buildings, and I like the competition—especially when I win! Never let it be said that the Golden Age Games are dull or unexceptional—they're not."

—**Ronald Nemerski, Detroit, Mich.**

"These Games are the best thing that can happen to a 'golden age' veteran, for it brings us closer to fellow veterans. Every year we meet old and new friends and share stories and experiences with each other. These Games are the best form of therapy that a veteran can get."

—**Sanford Pechersky, San Diego, Calif.**

"This is my second time at the Golden Age Games. It was great to meet so many servicemen and women who have the same goals. This is a great country and we must all protect our liberty."

—**Lawrence Scarcella, W. Babylon, N.Y.**

"I am humbled when I see and visit with other veterans who have injuries much worse than mine, and to see their courage to compete no matter how difficult it may be. I am proud to be able to visit with them."

—**Clifford Junkins, Holyoke, Mass.**

"With this being my second National Veterans Golden Age Games, I have been looking forward to renewing friendships and participating with those veterans who still have the 'can-do' attitudes. The thrill of the competition is the key, not the desire to win."

—**Robert Jackson, Odemon, Md.**

"Each year we look forward to the Games for recreational therapy at its best. There is nothing like meeting old friends and building camaraderie each year. The Games stir competition, effort, and accomplishment."

—**Steven Palmer, Panorama City, Calif.**

"I enjoy the annual reunion of good friends and buddies at the Golden Age Games. Renewing friendships, competing, and just being a part of the excitement is rewarding. This is my 12th time attending the Golden Age Games. May the Games continue!"

—**Ira Walton, Waco, Texas**

Thank You!

I'd like to offer a special thanks to all the transportation crew and bus drivers. They're doing a terrific job.

I must comment on one in particular, Jesse Green—bus driver extraordinaire—who was the most competent and accommodating bus driver I encountered. I wanted to commend this special man and offer thanks from a Korean War veteran.

Rino Rimoldi
Long Beach, Calif., VAMC

On the Menu...



Breakfast (6:30-9:00 a.m.):

Frittata, Breakfast Casseroles, Omelets; Cereal, Oatmeal; Pancakes, French Toast; Breakfast Breads; Assorted Fruits; Beverages

Lunch (11:00 a.m.-1:30 p.m.) & Dinner (4:00-6:30 p.m.):

Assorted Salads; Asian Sole Soup; Pastrami & Provolone, Grilled Vegetable Sandwich, Panther Burger; Glazed Roasted Salmon, Grilled Tuna Salad, Deluxe Pot Roast of Beef with Potatoes & Carrots in Beef Gravy, Pasta primavera, Blackened Grilled Tilapia with diced Chutney; Szechwan Stir Fry Station; Italian Pasta Station; Assorted Vegetables; Breads and Rolls; Desserts; Beverages